

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-08 /100 R

DRAFTED BY AF/W:D V KILLION:JWM
APPROVED BY AF:R M MOOSE
NEA/AFN:J K BISHOP (INFO)
EUR/WE:M CRAMERUS (SUBS)
-----091944 081009Z /21

R 072324Z DEC 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
INFO AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 292432

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, PINS, PDIP, MR

SUBJECT: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON AF ASSISTANT
SECRETARY

1. MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN CALLED ON AF ASSISTANT
SECRETARY MOOSE DECEMBER 5. AMBASSADOR KRYZA AND AF/W
COUNTRY OFFICER (KILLION) ATTENDED MEETING.

2. KOCHMAN TOLD MOOSE HE WOULD BE LEAVING FOR NOUAKCHOTT
DECEMBER 10 FOR CONSULTATIONS.RETURNING DECEMBER 22, AND
WANTED TO TOUCH BASE BEFORE DEPARTURE. KOCHMAN NOTED
THAT HE HAD ALREADY DISCUSSED BY TELEPHONE WITH MOOSE
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THE RECENT POLISARIO REPRESENTATIVE'S PRESS CONFERENCE
WHICH HAD INITIALLY CAUSED HIM CONCERN, BUT WHICH HAD
APPARENTLY NOT RPT NOT RECEIVED ANY PRESS PLAY IN THE
US. MOOSE SAID WE ARE WATCHING THE ACTIVITIES OF THE
POLISARIO REPRESENTATIVES IN THE US, BUT THE PERSON IN
QUESTION APPARENTLY HAS NOT DONE ANYTHING PROHIBITED BY
US LAWS. WE ARE TROUBLED BY HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AND

FILM SHOWINGS, BUT WOULD NOT WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO CALL ATTENTION TO HIM.

3. KOCHMAN ASKED FOR MOOSE'S ASSESSMENT OF HOW THE USG VIEWS THE WESTERN SAHARA PROBLEM AT THIS POINT. MOOSE

SAID WE ARE CONCERNED BY THE SITUATION, AND HOPE THAT THE ACTIONS MAURITANIA AND MOROCCO ARE NOW COOPERATING ON WILL BE SUFFICIENT TO DEAL WITH THE MILITARY ASPECTS OF THE PROBLEM. MOOSE POINTED OUT THAT, AS KOCHMAN KNEW, IT WAS DIFFICULT FOR US TO TAKE ADDITIONAL STEPS RE MILITARY ASSISTANCE IF THE EQUIPMENT WERE TO BE USED IN WESTERN SAHARA FIGHTING. THIS WOULD CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH CONGRESS.

4. MOOSE ASKED KOCHMAN FOR HIS OWN ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT SITUATION, AND OF THE ABILITY OF THE MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH SAHARA CRISIS DEVELOPMENTS. KOCHMAN REPLIED THERE ARE NOW SEVERAL NEW ELEMENTS IN THE PICTURE, AND FELT THAT A SERIOUS ASSESSMENT WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE CONVERSATIONS HE PLANNED TO HAVE SOON WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND FOREIGN MINISTER MOUKNASS. THE ALGERIANS, KOCHMAN SAID, HAVE CLEARLY INTENSIFIED THEIR HELP TO THE POLISARIO, AND THE SAHRAOUI COMPONENT ITSELF HAS BECOME ALMOST MINIMAL. THIS HAS CREATED AN EXPLOSIVE SITUATION. KING HASSAN HAS SAID HE WILL USE "HOT PURSUIT" CONFIDENTIAL

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UNLESS THE ALGERIANS SHOW SOME RESTRAINT, AND THIS COULD LEAD TO VIOLENT CONFRONTATION. MAURITANIA, FOR ITS PART, IS ALWAYS OPEN TO OTHER ALTERNATIVES. THERE HAVE BEEN ATTEMPTS AT MEDIATION IN THE PAST, AND RUMORS OF MEDIATIONS NOW. ALTHOUGH IT IS THE EASIEST TARGET, MAURITANIA HAS NOT LOST ITS BALANCE, AND IS DEALING WITH THE SITUATION TO THE BEST OF ITS ABILITY. KOCHMAN PROMISED TO REPORT FURTHER TO MOOSE AFTER HIS NOUAKCHOTT CONSULTATIONS.

5. KOCHMAN ASKED MOOSE IF HE HAD DETECTED ANY SUCCESS IN THE POLISARIO EFFORTS TO SPREAD ITS PROPAGANDA MESSAGE AMONG THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. MOOSE THOUGHT NOT, BUT ADDED THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR ATTRACTING MORE ATTENTION. AS LONG AS THE US DOES NOT PROVIDE ARMS FOR SPECIFIC USE AGAINST THE POLISARIO MOOSE DID NOT SEE THE POLISARIO QUESTION BECOMING A SERIOUS PUBLIC ISSUE OR GENERATING PUBLIC SYMPATHY IN THIS COUNTRY OTHER THAN IN SELECTED QUARTERS. SUPPLYING ARMS SPECIFICALLY DIRECTED AT THE POLISARIO WOULD BE CONTROVERSIAL, AND WOULD FOCUS MORE ATTENTION ON THE POLISARIO AND ITS PROPAGANDA EFFORTS. MOOSE POINTED OUT THAT VERY FEW

AMERICANS HAVE EVER HEARD OF THE POLISARIO AND IT IS NOT A SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC OPINION PROBLEM, BUT HE UNDERSTOOD KOCHMAN'S FEELINGS ABOUT POLISARIO PROPAGANDA EFFORTS HERE.

6. BEFORE HIS EXPECTED TALKS WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH, KOCHMAN WANTED TO CONFIRM HIS ASSESSMENT THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL USG CONTACT PERMITTED WITH THE POLISARIO. MOOSE ASSURED HIM THAT THIS IS THE CASE. WE HAVE TURNED ASIDE POLISARIO ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH CONTACT. OBVIOUSLY, CHANCE ENCOUNTERS COULD NOT BE ALWAYS RULED OUT, BUT OUR POSITION IS NO RPT NO OFFICIAL CONTACT. KOCHMAN REPLIED THAT THIS WAS SATISFACTORY.

7. MOOSE LOOKED FORWARD TO SEEING AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN
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AFTER HIS CONSULTATIONS, AND ADDED THAT HE WAS PLEASED AMBASSADOR KRYZA WAS GOING TO MAURITANIA. KRYZA HAS MOOSE'S FULL CONFIDENCE, AND THAT OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE. KOCHMAN NOTED THAT KRYZA HAS A GENUINE INTEREST IN MAURITANIA'S PROBLEMS AND WAS SURE KRYZA WOULD HAVE VALUABLE CONTACTS IN NOUAKCHOTT, WITH SENIOR LEADERS AND WITH PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH PERSONALLY. THE PRESIDENT WOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO AMBASSADOR KRYZA.

8. FYI. ON WAY OUT, COUNTRY OFFICER RAISED WITH KOCHMAN PROBLEM BROUGHT TO AF/W'S ATTENTION SHORTLY BEFORE MEETING BY SEVERAL TELEXES AND TELEPHONE CALLS FROM MEC REP CO., INC. OF LIVONIA, MICHIGAN. THE FIRM SELLS SPARE PARTS FOR ESSENTIAL MINING EQUIPMENT TO SNIM, AND HAS COMPLAINED DIRECTLY TO AMBASSADOR KOCHMAN AND TO AF/W ABOUT RECENT SLOW-DOWN IN SNIM PAYMENTS AND HAS EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER SECURITY SITUATION HINDERING IRON ORE SHIPMENTS. COUNTRY OFFICER REVIEWED OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH MEC REP CO., INC. AND, AS THE FIRM HAD REQUESTED, INFORMED KOCHMAN OF FIRM'S WILLINGNESS TO RENEGOTIATE 60-DAY REPAYMENT CONTRACT WITH SNIM TO PROVIDE FOR 90-DAY REPAYMENT SCHEDULE IF THIS WOULD BE HELPFUL. KOCHMAN ASSERTED THERE WAS NO PROBLEM WITH PAYMENT, AND SAID HE HAD ALREADY ASSURED THE FIRM IT SHOULD CONTINUE ITS SPARE PARTS SHIPMENTS TO SNIM. END FYI.

CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977STATE292432
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: D V KILLION:JWM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770456-0358
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19771281/aaaacqpq.tel
Line Count: 164
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 5d7d9009-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 321807
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON AF ASSISTANT SECRETARY
TAGS: PBOR, PGOV, PINS, PDIP, MR
To: NOUAKCHOTT
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/5d7d9009-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009